

A N
A BRIDGMENT
OF THE
PREROGATIVES
OF
S^t. ANN,

MOTHER of the MOTHER of GOD.

With the Approbation of the Doctors at *Paris*: And
Thence Done into English to accompany *The Contem-
plations on the Life and Glory of Holy MARY*; and
the Defence of the Same; with some Pieces of a like
nature.

To which a PREFACE is added concerning the
Original of the STORY.

IMPRIMATUR,

Liber cui Titulus, [*An Abridgment of the Prerogatives
of S. Ann, &c.*]

Feb. 14. 1687.

Guil. Needham R. R. in Christo
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L O N D O N :

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THE PREFACE.

THat Article of the Pastoral Letter of Cardinal *Camus*, which directs his Clergy not to disguise or misrepresent the Doctrine of the Church, as it shews the ingenuity of that Illustrious Prelate, so it manifestly detects, that he thought such Artifices were not unusual. I know that Ingenuity and fair Representing are what all will commend, but what few can bear, and as few practice. There is an Order of men whose Talent is generally thought not to lye much that way, who cease not with all imaginable vigour to prosecute the giver of so Pesticilent Advice. Nor is it indeed strange, that *Dexterity* should be looked on as more advantageous to a Party, than naked *Honesty*. But I must needs say, tho some have played more *cunningly*, there are others who have dealt more *honestly*; among whom I place the *Contemplator* on the *Life of H. Mary*: For this Gentleman deals plainly enough with the World, and gives such a Pattern of Devotion towards the *Queen*, as she is call'd, of *all pure Creatures*, as shews he is not ashamed to bring into the greatest *Light*, what others at the same time industriously cast into *Shadow*. And having shew'd himself so very fair and open, I expected he would have before this time prevented the office of the following Treatise; and that having said so much of the *Maternity* of Holy *Mary*, he must have more than a little left for the *Maternity* of St. *Anne*. For if both (according to him, and the *Maids* of St. *Joseph*)

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seph) the Tree is known by its Fruit, and the *Branches* are holy if the *Root* be sanctified; therefore if *Jesus* was intirely Holy, *Mary's* flesh was never defil'd, and if not *Marys*, neither *St. Anns*: If so, I say *St. Ann* has good reason to complain of *her* being passed over with such silence, while so great *Adorations* are paid to her *Daughter*. And if it look like *Protestant*-presumption to go to God the Father only through *Jesus Christ*, without the Intercession of his *Mother*, it must needs be *less* Presumption, and greater Humility, to beg the *Grandmother* too to intercede. If we can go so far, as to suspect the efficacy of our Prayers, when offered up in the *sole* Name of *Jesus*, and think it safest to recurr to the *Divine Maternity*, and the Name of *Mary*, it must needs be the best way to make them thoroughly effectual to follow the Advice of the *Josephine Maids*, and in the first place to address our selves to *St. Ann*, and in her name approach to the *Daughter*, who to be sure is not able to refuse her *Mother* any thing, no more than her *Son* can *her*. Nay, if we go to *St. Anns* Mother, it will be so much the better yet, and the same Reason would still carry us higher till we can go no farther. The *Principles* are plainly own'd, and expresly and industriously taught; and then it must be somewhat too like foulness to deny evident and palpable *Consequences*: But I am so charitable as to think that the *Contemplator* on *H. Mary*, who has so Seraphical a Pen in describing her *Honours* and *Glories*, is just to his *Principles*; and if so, none can be fitter to extol the *Prerogatives* of her *Mother*.

P. 26, 28.

For we are told from Apocryphal Writers, and his own fruitful Imagination, of the strange wonders of *Maries Maternity*, How she was exempted from the general Curse of Sin in her *Passive Conception* in the Womb of *S. Ann*; how she had the use of Reason while there; understood the Natures, and Decrees of God; saw into all the Mysteries of Grace; exercised Acts of a most pure, inflam'd and restless

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Love, and sung a joyful *Magnificat* to her wonderful Benefactor. We are told how the (a) Angels sung, *Glory be to the Mother of God*; and then it cannot be otherwise, but that she who is thus *early* complemented Queen of Heaven, must at her (b) *Nativity* be adorn'd with all inward and outward Graces, and have a most harmonious Body and Soul, upon which we must believe, that *Heaven, Limbo* and *Earth*, were replenish'd with transcendent Joys: We are after this told, how (c) from the hour of her Birth she makes a Vow, and at Three years end performs it; (d) how she is receiv'd into the Temple, and plac'd on the steps, on each of which she sings forth a Gradual Psalm, and contemplates on the several Mysteries of the *Rosary*, and then begs the Chief Priest to be admitted into the Society of the *Holy Women* who watch'd and pray'd by the Ark; how her whole Life, both in the Temple and afterward, is only (e) one continued act of *super-eminent* Contemplation and Extasy, with which at last she is cast into a *Feaver* of Love, which causes her death, upon which her Soul is conveyed with ineffable Harmonies of Angels, and seated in Glory above all their Quires, and (f) her Body assum'd up afterward, and vested with Super-Seraphical Majesty; and (g) how the Angels and Elect severally do *homage* to her; how the *Angels* give her the Badges of Sovereignty over *Men, Archangels, over Nobles, Thrones, over Kings*, and so the rest; and how solemnly the Blessed Trinity congratulates her; and all this is as particularly and exactly describ'd, as if he had been no less than Master of the Ceremonies.

It's pity the Scriptures should be so scanty and imperfect, as to have none of this rare stuff; but our *Josephine* Maids, who give the reason for the silence of the Evangelists concerning their great *Patrones*, may give the same, why so little is said by them concerning her *Daughter*, viz. That God *conceals* the greatest Excellencies, and that the holiest

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Saints are *lost* to the World through the *excess* of their *Merit*; that *Mary* being the Soul that nearest approach'd to the Divinity, was a Treasure as *ineffable* as God; but that, God hath at length been pleased to draw these things out of silence by *Annual Commemorations*.

But as many as reason freely, cannot but have some suspicion of the late ushering these Commemorations into the Kalendar, and be apt to guess at the true Reason of the silence of the Holy Penmen, and conclude, the Holy Spirit foreseeing that superstitious worship that was to come into the World, to undermine the glorious designs of this Blessed Religion, took away whatever might prove the occasions.

The Enemy of Mankind was soon sensible of the Provision the Holy Ghost had made against the superstition which he design'd to introduce into the Church, and therefore early set his Instruments at work to prepare Materials. Gospels were forg'd, and put forth under the name of Apostles, containing a Doctrine totally repugnant to theirs. Nor could Satan ever have a more cunning device to weaken and depreciate those Instruments of our Salvation deliver'd to us by God, than this of *coining* others; For by giving false Scriptures, not only those were imposed upon who were not able to discover the Cheat, but, afterward when the Doctrine had taken some root, even those that could; it being then very *hard* (if not *impossible*) satisfactorily to learn (other Authors of the same times, and of those immediately subsequent mentioning the same things) how much, or what is to be credited in such Writings, especially if ancient. For very frequently, after the Piece has appear'd to be a Forgery, the Matter of it has not been disbelieved, even by Learned Men, but kept its ground upon the Authority of other Writers, who were but *Copiers* of that Condemn'd *Original*.

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We have an Example of this in the very Case of the B. Virgin and her Mother, who continue still to have those Worships and Invocations made to them, whose probable Foundation is rejected even by the stiffest Asserters of their *Prerogatives*; for there being so very little said of the One, and nothing at all of the Other, in the received Gospels; our great Enemy, toward the accomplishment of his fore-mentioned Design, was not negligent to supply that seeming Defect: And how could this be better done, than under the Name of S. James the *Cousin* or *Brother* of our Lord, who being of the same Family, can't but be supposed well acquainted with what he relates. This seems to be the main Original for super-inducing such a Devotion; and the whole Fabrick of the *Marian* Religion appears to lean upon no better Support: But notwithstanding the Discovery of the Forgery, Gregory the 13th thought fit by his (a) *Breve*, (a) A. 1584 to give S. Ann a Festival on the 26th of July; and Sixtus 5. Reforming the *Breviary*, appointed an Order to it; which was the occasion of the Establishment of the *Maids* of S. Joseph, who upon the keeping this Day, formed themselves into a Family, taking S. Ann for their Patroness, and were afterwards confirmed, and taken into the Protection of the late Queen-Mother of France, Ann of Austria. So that in this Age the Mother of the Blessed Virgin is drawn out of Silence by a Festival of the Church; and the next Age may find perhaps another Festival even for Her Mother.

I cannot find so much as the Names of Joachim and Ann before Epiphanius, who indeed (b) mentions them, and no more; nor is his Authority considerable enough to establish any thing. S. Austin (c) writing against Faustus, doth not seem satisfied even as to this: and gives the same Reason that a Protestant would, which is its Uncanonicalness; *Quia Canonicum non est, non me constringit*, saith the Father. The (d) Epistle to Chromatius, concerning the Nativity of the Virgin, which is at the end of S. Hierom's Works, is no less

(b) Hæres. 78.

p. 1049. Ed.

Paris 1622.

(c) Contra

Faustum l. 23.

To 6. p. 98.

Paris 1555.

(d) De Nativitate

Virginis,

To. 9. par. 3.

(a) De Assump-
tione B. V.

less than that other of the same stamp concerning her (a) *Assumption*, spurious; and is so condemned by *Baronius*, having been so first by *Erasmus*, and since by all generally, except *Chr. a Castro*. Yet this and the *Prot-evangelium* are the incomparable Pieces that have had so many Copiers. It is not easie to determine of what Antiquity the Forgery is, but how great soever that be, there appear no Signs, but such as are very late, of its being much credited. *Germanus*, *Hippolytus*, and *Damascene* say a little; but the Story is very naked, till (e) *Nicephorus* that lying Monk dresses it; and even that is very short. The counterfeit *S. Hierom* tells a long Tale with such a grace, as to make it doubtful who deserves the Bell, he or the counterfeit *S. James*; they look like two such *inimitable* Originals, as one can't be thought to *Copy* from the other: Tho *Pseudo-Hieronymus* is so ingenuous as to tell us he is beholding to *Seleucus* for this fine Legend; and this gives us some hint how this came to be Minted.

(e) Lib. 1. c. 7.

First, we have the Letter of *Chromatius* and *Heliodorus* to *S. Hierom*, pretending that *Armonius* and *Virinus* had told them that *S. Hierom* had an *Hebrew Gospel* of *S. Matthew*, wherein the Infancy of the *V. Mary*, and our *Saviour* were written, which they desire him to turn into *Latin*: To this the False *Hierom* answers, excusing the difficulty of the Work, for that the Apostle design'd not to have it published, that therefore he had *sealed it up* in the *Hebrew*, and not added it to his *Common Gospel*, to the end it might be *secret*, but delivered it to be kept by some *choice Religious Men*, who would not suffer it to be Translated, but only gave some Relations that it contained; till *Seleucus* first publish'd it, wherein tho he spake Truth as to the History and Miracles, yet added many Falshoods as to the Doctrines, and therefore he promises to make a verbal and exact Translation from the *Hebrew*: But the Forgery is so ill spun, and the Blunders so gross, as to give as good a Character of the Au-

Author's Talents, as of his Veracity. The Author probably was *Seleucus* the *Manichæan*, or *Leucius*, as *J. Casaubon* reads in some Manuscripts, the first Syllable being left out; and 'tis for this Reason that *S. Austin* disputing against *Faustus* the *Manichee*, * rejects such Apocryphal Writings, perhaps the very same: and elsewhere condemns this *Leucius*. But he can be condemn'd by none more severely than by a Pope, *Gelasius*, who calls him a *Disciple of the Devil*, and says, all his Books are Apocryphal; which reflects a little odly on that other Pope, who not only received this Forgery, but founded a Day and Office upon the shameless Fable of this Heretick.

* Si illius Apocryphæ Scripturæ ubi Joachim, Pater Mariæ legitur, detineretur. L. 23.

But because *Pseudo-Jacobus* writes with greater Authority, and would intrude his stuff for Scripture, it may not be amiss, or undiverting, to see what is so Authoritatively deliver'd with the Apostolical Benediction at the end.

'He begins the Story, telling us of one Joachim, who is said to be very Rich and Charitable, and to give double Offerings to God of his Estate. Now, we are told, that when the great Feast of the Lord drew near, the People of Israel brought all their Offerings, amongst whom was Joachim, none of the least eminent; and Reuben stood up against him, and said, It is not lawful for you to offer yours, because you have not made Seed in Israel. Upon which the Gentleman was very sad, and went to the Genealogy of the Twelve Tribes, saying to himself, I'll see whether in the Tribes of Israel I can find any who are without Seed. Having accordingly made an enquiry, he sees that all the Righteous had Seed: Thence he calls Abraham to mind; and how God was pleased to give him Isaac in his old Age.

'And Joachim was much cast down, and appear'd not to his Wife, but retir'd into the Wilderiness, where he fixed his Tent, and fasted forty days, and forty nights, saying with himself, I will not go up to eat or drink, but my Prayer shall be my Food.

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‘ But in the mean while his Wife Ann endured two griefs,
 ‘ her Widowhood and her Barrenness. Now the great Festival
 ‘ came, and Judith her Maid said to her, How long will you
 ‘ afflict your spirit? It’s not lawful for you to mourn, for ’tis a
 ‘ great Holy-day: Come, Madam, put on your best Dress. But
 ‘ Ann answer’d, Depart from me, I will not do it: God has
 ‘ grievously humbled me. Judith on the other side was still im-
 ‘ portunate with her Mistress, and said, What shall I say to
 ‘ you if you will not hear? Deservedly has God shut up your Womb.
 ‘ And Ann was greatly troubled at it, and was prevail’d upon
 ‘ to put off her Mourning habit, and to put on her Wedding
 ‘ garments: And about the Ninth hour she went into the Gar-
 ‘ den to walk, where seeing a Laurel-Tree, she sits down under
 ‘ it, and pours forth her Prayers to this effect; God of my Fa-
 ‘ thers bless me, and hear my Prayer, as thou blessed’st the
 ‘ Womb of Sarah, and gavest her a Son.

‘ When looking up into Heaven she saw a Sparrows Nest,
 ‘ which made her lament after a very grievous rate, and burst
 ‘ into such expressions; Wo is me! To what can I be likened?
 ‘ or, What Womb brought me forth, that I should be a Curse
 ‘ before the Children of Israel? For they laugh at, and re-
 ‘ proach me, they throw me out of the Temple of the Lord my
 ‘ God. Alas! what am I like to? I can’t be compar’d to the
 ‘ Birds of the Heaven, &c. And after this manner she pro-
 ‘ ceeds, alledging to God, that he deals worse by her than by
 ‘ any other sort of Creatures, worse than by the Birds and
 ‘ Beasts, nay, than by the Elements, for that all these are
 ‘ fruitful. And no sooner had she finish’d her Complaint, but
 ‘ the Angel of the Lord took his flight towards her, and said
 ‘ to her, Ann, Ann, the Lord has heard thy Prayer, thou shalt
 ‘ conceive, and bring forth a Child, and thy name shall be ce-
 ‘ lebrated over all the World. Then Ann very gratefully makes
 ‘ a Vow to God, to make a Present to him of the Child which
 ‘ she shall have, whether Male or Female, to Minister to him
 ‘ all the days of its life.

‘ And

‘ And after this, behold two Angels came, and said to her,
 ‘ Joachim your Husband is coming with his Flocks: For the
 ‘ Angel of the Lord came down to him, and said Joachim,
 ‘ Joachim, God has heard thy Prayer, go hence, behold, Ann
 ‘ thy Wife shall conceive in her Womb. And he went down, and
 ‘ call’d his Shepherds, saying, Bring me ten pure Ewe Lambs,
 ‘ and they shall be for my God; Twelve Calves which shall be
 ‘ for the Priests; and an Hundred Goats for the People.

‘ And Joachim came with his Flocks, and Ann stood in the
 ‘ Gate and saw him coming, and ran and hung on his neck, say-
 ‘ ing, now she knew she was Blessed, and so sings her Magnificat.

‘ And Joachim rested the first day in his House, and on the
 ‘ morrow made his offerings; but being more incredulous than
 ‘ his Wife, he desires a Sign for the confirmation of what the
 ‘ Angel had foretold, which accordingly appears on the Ephod.
 ‘ To conclude, Ann at the end of nine months is delivered of
 ‘ the Virgin Mary. And the Birth is little less Miraculous
 ‘ than the Conception.

‘ Afterwards, when she was six Months old, her Mother
 ‘ put her on the ground, to try whether she could walk upright;
 ‘ and she walked seven steps, and came into her Mothers Lap.
 ‘ And Ann said, As the Lord lives, thou shalt not walk on the
 ‘ Earth, till I shall have offer’d thee in the Lord’s Temple.
 ‘ And she made a Chappel in her Chamber, and whatever was
 ‘ impure or common, was for her sake remov’d: And she had
 ‘ Holy Hebrew Maids to wait on her.

‘ The first year being over, Joachim made a great Feast,
 ‘ and invited the High Priests and Scribes, with the Sanhe-
 ‘ drin and all the People; and he offer’d up his Oblations to
 ‘ the Priests, and they blessed him, saying, God of our Fathers
 ‘ bless this Girl, and give her a famous and eternal Name in all
 ‘ Generations. And all the People said, Amen, Amen. Then
 ‘ they offer’d her to the Priests, and they blessed her, saying,
 ‘ The most high God bless this Child, and bless her with a bles-
 ‘ sing that shall have no end. Then the Mother snatching her

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‘ away, gave her the Teat, and withal made this Song; I will
 ‘ sing Praises to the Lord my God, who has visited me, and
 ‘ taken from me the Reproach of mine Enemies. The Lord God
 ‘ has given the manifold Fruit of Righteousness in his sight; who
 ‘ shall declare to the Sons of Reuben that Ann gives suck?

‘ Singing this, she carried her into her Chappel, and went forth
 ‘ and Ministred to them. The Feast being over, they went away
 ‘ rejoycing, and gave her the name of Mary, glorifying the God
 ‘ of Israel.

‘ When she was two years old, Joachim would have carried
 ‘ her to the Temple to pay their Vow, but that Ann hindred it
 ‘ till the completion of the third year, which was then done with
 ‘ a great deal of solemnity. The Hebrew holy Maids being
 ‘ invited, took each their Lamps and lighted them, and went
 ‘ without looking back till they came to the Temple; where the
 ‘ High Priest receiv’d and kist her, and said, Mary, the Lord
 ‘ has magnified thy Name in all Generations; and more to that
 ‘ effect. And he placed her upon the third Step of the Altar, and
 ‘ the Lord God sent his Grace upon her, and she Danced, and
 ‘ all the House of Israel fell in love with her. But the wonder is,
 ‘ she took no notice of her Parents, and they went home admiring
 ‘ and praising God that she turn’d not after them.

‘ After this we are told, how she was educated here like a
 ‘ Dove, and fed by the hands of an Angel; till being twelve
 ‘ years of Age, a great Council was held how to dispose of her.
 ‘ This was open’d by the High Priest, who tells the rest of the
 ‘ Priests her Age, and asks their advice, lest the Sanctuary
 ‘ forsooth be defiled. The Answer was, Do thou stand at
 ‘ the Altar and pray for her, and whatsoever God shall manifest
 ‘ to thee, that will we do. Upon this the H. Priest, in his Pon-
 ‘ tifical Habit, goes into the Holy of Holies and makes suppli-
 ‘ cation for her, when behold the Angel of the Lord stood by
 ‘ him, and said to him, Zachary, Zachary, go forth, and call
 ‘ together the Widowers of the People, and let all bring their
 ‘ Rods; and to whom God shall show the Sign, his Wife shall she
 ‘ be to keep.

‘ Now

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‘ Now the Heralds went over all the Land of Judea, and the
‘ Trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all ran forth; and Joseph
‘ throwing away his Ax, went out to meet them: So they went
‘ all together to the H. Priest, who taking the Rods they brought,
‘ from them, went into the Temple and pray’d; after Prayer he
‘ took the Rods and went forth, and restor’d to every one his Rod,
‘ and no sign appear’d. But Joseph took his the last, and a Dove
‘ immediately flew out of it, to the no small amazement of the
‘ spectators, and lighted on Joseph’s head. Upon this the Priest
‘ said to him, The Lord has chosen you to take this Virgin to keep
‘ her. Which Joseph opposes, making answer, I have Children,
‘ and am old, whereas she is a young Girl; whence I am afraid of
‘ becoming ridiculous to the Children of Israel. At last the Ven-
‘ geance being propos’d to him, which God executed on Corah,
‘ Dathan and Abiram, being put by it into a dreadful fright, he
‘ makes no longer resistance, but says, Mary, I take thee from
‘ the Temple of the Lord, but I will leave thee at home, and go
‘ about my Carpenters Trade: And I pray God to keep thee all
‘ the days of thy life.

‘ Then we are told how, not long after this, the Priests had a
‘ Council about making a Veil to the Temple, for which the Holy
‘ Maids of the House of David were call’d, and all took their
‘ work by Lot, true Purple falling to Mary’s share. About which
‘ time Zacharias dying, is succeeded by Samuel. Mary having
‘ receiv’d her Purple, went to work; and taking a Pitcher, went to
‘ draw water, and she heard a Voice, Hail Mary full of Grace:
‘ and she look’d about on both sides to know whence the Voice
‘ came, but could see nothing. She comes trembling into the House,
‘ puts down her Pitcher, and taking the Purple, sat down in her
‘ seat to work; and the Angel of the Lord stood before her, and
‘ said, Fear not Mary, for thou, &c. Then are intermixt some
‘ Passages taken out of the Evangelists.

‘ After which it’s said, that she being six months gone, and
‘ sixteen years old, Joseph return’d from his business, about
‘ which he had been some years without coming home to his
‘ Wife.

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'Wife. Now finding her big, he was much startled, and ex-
 'postulated with her in many words; but is at last advertis'd
 'of the whole matter by an Angel. But the pity was, that a
 'Scribe coming to speak with Joseph, perceives Mary great
 'with Child, and upon this makes a terrible outcry. Immedi-
 'ately Justice lays hold on Joseph, and he is brought before the
 'II. Priest; and being both examin'd, he maintains that he
 'had not kept company with her; and she says, with a great
 'deal of bitter crying, that she had neither his nor any other
 'Mans. They both denying, the Priest makes them drink the
 'Water of Redargution, which having done them no hurt, to
 'the great astonishment of the beholders, the Priest said, that
 'since God had not manifested their sin, neither did he condemn
 'them.

'Then is inserted what is related by St. Luke, how upon the
 'Edict of Augustus, Joseph leads her to Bethlehem. But
 'this is not without enriching the Relation, and using even
 'wicked and immodest expressions. At last we are told, how
 'she was Deliver'd in a Cave, saving S. Luke's Honour, Jo-
 'seph having found her a Midwife by a great Miracle, and in
 'his journey met with plenty of great Miracles: which Mid-
 'wife tells another who is call'd Salome; who not believing
 'that a Virgin had brought forth a Child, comes to make the
 'proof; which is so profanely and impudently described, toge-
 'ther with other matters of as vile a nature as can well be
 'imagined. All which declare it to be made in derision of
 'Christianity; but that the better to make the Cheat pass,
 'there are inserted in form of Rapsody, some Expressions of
 'the Evangelists, and some Rites to which colour may be given
 'by some passages of the Old Testament, besides the simplicity
 'of the manner of Speech, and several Hebraisms affected.
 'By the help of which he thought he might, as he doth con-
 'clude, I James writ this History in Jerusalem, where a tumult
 'being rais'd, I withdrew my self into a desert place, till the
 'death of Herod; and then like an Apostle he gives the Blessing.

The

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The first Man that produced this rich Gospel, and Translated it from the *Greek* was * *Postel*; and it came out with the Notes of *Bibliander*, after which it appear'd with a great deal of suitable company, under the Title of † *Orthodox Writings*, which have as much right all of them to this Title, as *this* Gospel has to the *Brother of our Lord*. This Book indeed is so agreeable to the *Genius* of the first Publisher, as to make || *H Stevens* suspect him to have a finger in the Forgery. But without defrauding him of the praises of handing it forth into the World, we may reasonably allow it elder, and probably the *Original*, as hath been said, of the Fable: which is too believ'd by *Casaubon*. This much is certain, that the Gospel going under the name of *S. James*, the Brother of our Lord, is expressly nam'd, and condemn'd as *Apocryphal* by ∴ the *Roman Synod* under *Gelasius*, about the latter end of the fifth Century, as likewise the Book of the *Nativity of our Saviour*, and concerning *Mary and the Midwife*; with all those written by *Leucius*. We have by the same Synod, consisting of Seventy Bishops, condemn'd the several Gospels passing under the names of *Thaddeus*, *Matthias*, *Peter*, *Barnaby*, *Thomas*, *Bartholomew*, *Andrew*, which no doubt but were fill'd with such like Stories. It is no wonder then, if in the darker Ages such Trash came to be receiv'd, when it was very hard to make things *incredible* enough to gain *belief*; and no Superstition so gross as might not pass under those venerable Names. We have not only the Book of the *Infancy of Jesus*, and that of the *Birth of Mary* refer'd to by the *Legendaries*; but some also were not asham'd to own the Gospel of *S. Ann*. An Instance whereof is given in one *Bonaventure* of *Ipres* in *Flanders* by *H Stevens*, telling us, That 'When Jesus Christ was grown big enough to work, Joseph began to employ him in his Trade, and once above the rest having commanded him to Saw a piece of Wood, he saw'd it without taking heed to the mark that Joseph had made, so

*Prot-evangelion cum Evangelica Historia S. Mari Evangelistæ, & vita ejus in 8. Basil. 1552.

† Orthodoxographia, Gr. Lat Editore Gryneo. Bald. 1569.

|| L' Introduction au Traité de la conformité des Merveilles Antiques avec les Modernes. ch. 33.

∴ An. 494. Con. Bini. To. 2. p. 264.

*

that

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'that it was too short; at which Joseph, being very angry, threatn'd to beat him, and would have done so, had not he made it longer, by taking himself one end, and making Joseph take the other, and each one pulling. If such things as these are not a scandal to Christianity, and the Invention of the Father of Lies, I know not what is.

But, God be praised, it has fell out very happily, that these *False Evangelists* have notoriously given themselves the Lye; having not either Learning or Wit enough to lay the *Plan* of their Story so, as not to clash with the greatest Evidences of *Time* and *Place*. Hence they bring upon the Stage such persons as *Issachar, Reuben, &c.* who we are certain *never were*. And who, that is in the least acquainted with the Customs of the *Jews*, can believe, that a Girl of Three years old was ever put into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and there liv'd alone, without any body to take care of her, for many years? Certainly if *only* the High Priest entred there, and he not above *one* day in the year, and then neither not above *once* or *twice*; and if he entred three or four times, was to be put to death: nothing can be grosser than to place there a young helpless Child. And if we believe this, it is not much if we believe she lived there without Meat, Drink, Bed and Conversation for Ten or a Dozen years. Besides, that there were no *Nuns* or *Holy Women* in the Temple, as the Story supposes, is at large proved against *Baronius* by * *Casaubon*.

* Exercit. ad
Bar. App. An-
nal. N. 21, 22,
23.

Having said so much of the *Matter* and *Foundation*, I have but little to add of the following Book *it self*. The Publisher tells you, That *it relates directly to the Glory of the Supream Creator of all things*: And the Approvers tell you, that *they find nothing in it but what is conformable to the Apostolical Roman Church*; and that *it is very useful to maintain the Devotion to S. Ann.* But how directly that Devotion relates to the Glory of the Supream Creator, they may be better able to reconcile than I am. I might easily com-
pare

The Preface.

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pare some of the Doctrines with those of a *Spanish* Doctor lately condemn'd at *Rome*; nay, and parallel some of the very *Expressions*, to shew that what is *Heretical* at one time, may be *Orthodox* at another. I might also shew how the *Legend* came to be patch'd up out of the History of *Hannah*, *Samuel's* Mother, and that of our ever Blessed Lord; and might give a view of some other † Devotions made to *St. Ann*: But I am afraid I have too extravagantly already tired the Reader's patience, and therefore do conclude.

† Ave Maria
Gratia plena,
&c. — &c.
benedicta sit
Anna Mater
sua, de qua
sine macula
tua processit
caro Virginea.

C

TO

T O T H E

Queen Regent.

M A D A M,

IT is *Divine Providence*, and not *Fortune* or *Humane Industry*, that bestows Scepters and Crowns; and all *France* visibly discovers in the Regency of YOUR MAJESTY, the Mild and Loving thoughts of the *Divine Regent* of the World, in giving us the Best, as well as the Greatest Princess of the Earth to Govern it.

But may YOUR MAJESTY be pleas'd to suffer us, the poor *Daughters* of St. JOSEPH, to declare, That it is in You that we have not only *observ'd*, but *felt* one of the most beautiful *draughts* of this *Divine Providence*; which is, That as it hath its *Eye* and *Scepter* over the least of the *Worms* that creep upon the Earth, as well as over the most exalted of *Monarchs* who is lifted up on the Throne; So, *Great Queen*, Your *Regency* bearing its Glory already beyond Admiration, by so many Glorious Actions which seem to rob each other of their splendor in the Government of Your State, You judg'd that it would have lost somewhat of its Lustre, had not You shew'd Your self as well a Charitable Mother of the poor Orphans, as a worthy *Queen Regent* of this great *Monarchy*. You have said from the beginning, what the *Wisdom Incarnate* said formerly, in this World, *Suffer these little Souls to come to me*. I am pleas'd to assist the Designs of *Preventing Grace*, which has drawn 'em out of the evil steps and perils of great Miseries, to which an

To the Queen Regent.

extreme Poverty would have reduc'd 'em: Divine *Providence* has taken 'em into its care, and it pleases Me to make My self its Agent, or Lieutenant, in the means of Loving and Helping them: I receive them under my Protection, and into My Bosom.

Truly it is an Action so much the more Powerful and Meritorious before God, as it has the less of Interest, and as he alone could be its *motive*: But 'tis an Action which perfectly resembles, and worthily honours the steps of Divine Providence, of whose Favours and Succours, the Little as well as the Great, the *Shorn* as well as the *Crowned* heads partake.

The most sublime cares in which YOUR MAJESTY is constantly to Admiration taken up for the Glory and Felicity of this State, are, it must be confess'd, the lively *Colours* of its *Pourtraiture*: But Divine *Providence* was willing that the little destitute Maids, whose Honour and Life You preserve, should give the *Shades*.

That therefore all *France* may admire the wonders of Your Conduct, Your poor *Maids* of St. *Joseph* will do nothing else in the World but publish to it the Miracles of Your Charity, and declare in the condition wherein we mean Creatures are, That as there is nothing too *high* for Your Regency, so nothing is too *low* for Your *Goodness*; which by too much meriting towards us, puts us into an entire inability of being ever able to be sufficiently Thankful.

Behold, nevertheless, a small Testimony of our profound Acknowledgment, which carries our Hearts to the Feet of Your Majesty by this little Work and *Abridgment of the Privileges of St. Ann*, which we adjudged ought to be, if not worthy, at least not unworthy of Your Eyes, for the dignity of the Subject which it treats. And the motives which invited us to this Duty are, That as it was the day of St. *Ann*, when God inspir'd into us the first designs of Erecting an *House* after the Pattern of *his*, where Maids should

To the Queen Regent.

should be bred and instructed till the time they be provided for, in like manner as the Holy Virgin her Daughter was so carefully and so holily educated by her: So is it this same Saint which we believe to have been among the second Causes, that which procur'd us from the First this incomparable favour of the greatest Queen in the World, who imitates her *Virtues*, as well as worthily bears her *Name*.

Wherefore after having taken St. *Ann* for our *Tutelar*, and the *Governant* in this *House*, and Dedicated to her a Chappel in the Design of erecting thereto a *Confrairy* in her Honour, who hath tied us to *her self* by *Adoption*, and by *Spirit* and *Grace* to *Jesus* and *Mary*, who compose her Family; we have presum'd for the best return of Thanks which we have been able to present to Your Majesty, to represent to You upon this little Paper, as in a Map, a World of Merits and Perfections which were in this Great Saint, so to make yours acknowledg'd and admir'd, and God prais'd by seeing *your Majesties* Life a true Image and Abstract of *Hers*. For if St. *Ann* were of the Blood-Royal of *David*, and consequently of the Race of Patriarchs and Prophets, and so much honour'd by God; all the World knows that Your Majesty is of a Royal Birth, so exalted, as the Sun always honours it with its Light, having no Horizon or setting for its Realms.

If St. *Ann* were Great in *Piety* and Devotion; and if imitating the ancient *Ann*, *Samuel's* Mother, she had frequent recourse to the Sanctuary by her Prayers and Vows; the *Piety* which Your Majesty has from Your Ancestors, *Charles 5.* and *Philip 2.* is so familiar to You, as it may be call'd the *Star* which commands Your Inclinations; the *Spirit* which gives Life to Your Actions, and *Success* to all Your Designs.

If St. *Ann* be worthily nam'd by St. *Damascene* a *Reasonable Turtle*, forasmuch as she past good part of her Life in solitude and sighing; alas, *Madam*, how many years has
your

To the Queen Regent.

your Majesty led a Life more like to a *solitary* Person, than to the *chiefest* and the most *virtuous* Queen of the Universe!

If *St. Ann* were great in the Love which she bore to her *God*, whom she could scarce ever suffer to be out of her sight; and to her *Neighbor*, by the assistance she gave to all who were any ways necessitous; alas, Great Queen, it is at Your *expence*, and by Your own *experience*, that You have learnt, like the *Messias*, both to suffer for *God*, and to suffer with the Miserable. And a time was when the Divine Providence had taken away the use and disposal of Riches, thereby to augment Your Charity towards *God*, but which at this day has given You the means whereby You may exercise Charity towards Your *Subjects* with a Liberality as extensive as exceeds both hopes and desires.

If *Prayer* and *Faith* made *St. Ann* bear the Fruit of *Benediction*, and the first fruits of our *Redemption*; our Sacred Monarch, who shall, if it please *God*, one day place the *Flowerdeluces* above the *Crescent*, and the other fair flower of Your Majesties Crown, are the Fruits as well of Your *Prayers*, and of Your Royal *Virtues*, as of your *Womb*. Have not so many reiterated Vows, so many sighs of *your Majesty* sent toward Heaven, made you the peaceable Dove of this State, and the Calm of our Storms?

If *St. Ann* gave Lessons to her little Daughter, the holy Virgin, of living in Humility, Charity and Holiness; how many Blessings owe we to Heaven, to see this Royal Spirit with which Your Majesty was born, and so many excellent Virtues and Royal Qualities slide so admirably into the Eyes, Ears, and Spirit of our good young King? How under so good a Government shall we not have a King of Wonders, one Liberal, Generous, and Pious?

Lastly, If *Jesus* and *Mary* were both the most excellent Masterpieces of the Divine Power, both the Richest Treasures of Divine Wisdom, both the Divinest Objects of its Goodness, both the Worthiest Subjects of the Cares and the Govern-

To the Queen Regent:

Government of *St. Ann*, yet hinder'd her not from dayly *adopting* and associating to these two noble parts of her Family, several confiding Souls; So, tho the Attention of Your Majesty more peculiarly regards the Education of the *King*, and the second Hope of *France*, his Brother; *both* given by Heaven for the Rest of this Monarchy, and for the Consolation of Your Majesty; yet You disdain not to open Your Bosom, and to tender the Arms of Your Mercy and Protection to the poor little *Orphans*, the *Maids of St. Joseph*.

Behold, *MADAM*, the just resemblances of Your Glorious Pattern, which have given us the Confidence of laying at Your *Majesties* Feet an Abridgment of the Wonders of this Holy Lady, whom God chose from all Eternity to be the Principle of his Ways in the Salvation of Men; thinking we could not better clear our selves of the Ingratitude which Your Majesties Lustre and excess of Goodness have made necessary, than by a little Treatise that contains the *Prerogatives of St. Ann*, to whom *your Majesty* gives and consecrates dayly Your *Person*, Your *Family*, Your *Realm* and Your *Subjects*; and in consideration of whom, we bring to the Feet of *your Majesty* the Vows which we make of living and dying,

MADAM,

YOUR MAJESTIES

*Most Humble, and most Obedient, and
most Obliged Servants,*

THE MAIDS OF S. JOSEPH.

THE

The Epistle of the French Publisher, to the Christian Reader.

I*t is about a year since, a little Book, intituled, The Acts of Invocation of St. Joseph, composed by the R. P. Chiflet of the Society of Jesus, accidentally falling into my hands, I Publish'd it, and took the boldness to Dedicate it to the Queen. Now in as much as I could not have the Honour of presenting it my self, a Great Lady of the Court did me the favour to supply this defect, and to present it in my name. But it being but a week since I receiv'd the Copy of another Treatise, Intitul'd, The Prerogatives of St. Ann, Dedicated in like manner to her Majesty by the Maids of St. Joseph, it seem'd proper to me to Print this as a continuance of the former. I therefore put it to the Press as soon as I could, not to retard the Fruit that the Publick might thence reap; and, having otherwise propos'd to my self, that in things which respect the Love of God, together with Christian Piety as well towards St. Joseph as St. Ann, as likewise the service of our Great Queen, I ought to use Diligence, and to give in the time prefixt, as I have endeavour'd to do, this little Work; so if by Præcipation of the Impression there be any faults crept in, I beseech you, Reader, that you would excuse them, upon the assurance I give you, that in the new Edition which I purpose suddenly to make, I will endeavour to give you content, and to make this Book as Correct as it shall be possible for me. Receive it therefore, Reader, for a Testimony of mine Affection, or rather for the Love of your self, which I am assur'd will not fail of being agreeable, seeing it relates directly to the Glory of the Supreme Creator of all things. Farewell.*

THE
P R E R O G A T I V E S
O F
S^t. A N N E.

C H A P. I.

The Silence of the Evangelists concerning the Merits of St. Ann.

IT is Nature's best Order to conceal from our eyes what her excellentest and chiefest Works contain of the utmost perfection and greatness, as if in this she meant to reproach the Vanity of our minds, which can hardly conceive a good desire in the heart, without bringing it up immediately to the mouth, and publishing it to the Rays of the Sun. Whereas Heaven, the most wonderful part of the visible Creation, shews not its powerful influences which govern all inferior things; or the Fire, that imperious quality which softens the most intractable Metals; or the Earth its Gold, which it forms within its entrails; or the Sea its Treasures, which it incloses within its Abysses.

An Order that might be stil'd Religious, if Nature guided it with Judgment: but is yet better observ'd in Grace, which is pleas'd to cover and drown in Ignorance and Silence the greatest perfections of the most holy and most elevated Souls, with the design, that being afterward reveal'd, they may more attract our admirations and respects. And when I consider how God shewed not himself to Moses, but in the transient glimpse of a burning bush, and how he says that his habitations are in darkness, and his thrones in the clouds, and that he never abas'd himself so low as to make our senses or our reason ca-

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pable

The Prerogatives of St. Ann.

pable of his *sight*, or of the *knowledg* of his *perfections*; I discover presently, in my Opinion, the reason for which certain Souls, the most eminent in sanctity, and the most approaching to the Deity, are a *Treasure as ineffable as God*, who conceals it from human eyes. The *Athenians* offer'd more Incense to that God they *knew not*, than to those who were fastned to their Shrines, or inclosed in their Temples: So we owe more reverence and honour to those *heavenly* and *glorious* Souls who are happily hidden to the World, and *lost in God*, to be known by him alone, than to those whose Virtue has been Preach'd, and who have had an *immortal* glory among Mortals. These have had their *share* in the rewards of the World; those have been *despised*; These have united the honours of the *Earth* with the merit of those of *Heaven*; those have renounc'd their *own* Glory to procure that of *God*. And St. Paul having said, that there are certain Souls who are willing to go beyond the first Lessons, who learn by the observance of *God's* Commandments, and the *Churches* *Lev. 3.*, to study the most exalted maxims of Christianity, and surpass the obligations common to all Christians, even so far as to the renouncing, hating, and *annihilating* themselves, to be sacrific'd on every trial and occasion to the Empire of Divine Love, which *transforms* them all into God, and makes them *enter into the Powers of the Lord*, (saith the Prophet) that is, into an adorable *Communication*, and as it were into the rights of the same Attributes of Purity, Holiness and Charity of this God, to whose *Union* this kind of *Perfect Life* has exalted 'em; this heavenly Doctor call'd such Souls dead, and *hidden in God with Jesus Christ*, because the spiritual work of inward *Abnegations*, and *Abandonings* of all their proper *Interest*, and their own *self* into that of God, falling not under the sense and reason of men, it must also thence be, that men are not capable of the *Perfections* which this Labour acquires them: which makes him say, That he esteems them greater for the *perfections* which they have and discover not, than for those which would carry their Reputation and Name over the Universe, and acquire 'em the Acclamations and Honours of the World. Words which seem to have been read by that Ancient, when he said, That Virtue is hidden within her self, that our eyes were too feeble to support her lustre; and that she hid for those who were most assiduous at her Sacrifices, Beauties which would obscure those of the Sun, if the generality of men were capable of observing 'em.

Hence I draw this advantageous Conclusion for the Honour of St. Ann, That had men looked on her perfection with a steady eye, and
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3

a constant view, she had not appear'd greater to their eyes than *Saturn* to ours, which tho the *vasstest* in extent of all our Planets, the most *perfect* too and most *beautiful*, seems the *smallest*, because he is the *farthest* removed from our sight. St. *Ann* was a *Mystery* hidden from Eternity in *God*, who was pleased to make use of her for the productions of his first Designs, and for giving by her the first attacks to *death*, which had introduc'd into the World; demonstrating how, if the *weakness* of one Woman had given beginning to its *Conquests*, the *Virtue* and *Generosity* of another should beat down its *Trophies*, and overturn its *Empire*; since in the ordinary course of Generation she conceiv'd and gave to the World a Daughter, who acknowledg'd neither its Way nor Dominion. If then in this miserable case of our race, our Impotence be such, as not to be able to resist the power, and to oppose our selves to the violence of *Death*, a St. *Ann* be found alone in Nature, who has done that which none could tell how to do, taken from Death the first Pretensions and Rights which it had usurped over human births; Who can have thoughts capable to form an Idea of her *merit*? or words to express what is not beneath both what she *was*, and what we *owe* to her? Add, how this Saint having studied nothing but continual *Annihilations* of her *self*, and *Glorifications* of her *God*, she retain'd nothing of the Earth, but made her self wholly Celestial, whose merit was therefore remov'd from all *human* knowledg, and reserv'd for the *Divine* alone. And as *Alexander* the Great said, That the Scepter and Crown of the World were not, but for the Virtues of him who admitted nothing worthy to bound his Ambition, but what was not known to the rest of men, and what the greatest of the Gods kept *conceal'd* in his brain; She also whom *Jesus Christ* had design'd for the Regency and Government of his Family, to command there as the Virgins Mother, who was *His*, required far other qualifications than common Morality, and ought to have far different Virtues from those, which *ordinary* holiness teaches all men: which therefore have been kept unknown, by reason of the *greatness* and *excess* of this *merit*. But God alone, who is able to give the just praises of holy Actions to every one according to the weight and excellence of their value, has been pleased to draw them out of silence in *this* Age, by an Annual *Commemoration* and solemn *Feast* in his Church, to shew them unto all the World in the Glory of their Triumphs; and has discover'd to us two sorts, some External, which she borrows elsewhere; others Internal, with which she adorns her Soul. For

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CHAP. II.

The External Perfections of St. ANN.

I Advance them from the consideration of her Daughter; for if the goodness of the Fruit necessarily proves that of the Tree, this fair Plant of Eternity, *St. Ann*, can't be better known than by her Daughter the *Holy Virgin*; and tho one should write in her honour as many Volumes as are in the World, there could not hence be given us so perfect a knowledg of her *Prerogatives*, as is in simply saying, that she was the *Mother of the Mother of God*, and the *Grand-mother of God* himself.

It is this Tree that the Angels shewed to *St. Bridgid*, saying to her, Figure to your self, chaste Spouse of *Jesus Christ*, a Royal Eagle, who going to make her Nest, and prepare a Lodging for her young Eagles, goes from Forest to Forest, flies from Mountain to Mountain, to chuse a Tree which may serve her design, and having met with that wick surpasses all others in height and beauty, which has the deepest and strongest Roots, and the best defended from Storms and Tempests, she stops there, and makes choice of the strongest Branch, and the nearest to Heaven, to feed there, and breed her young ones.

Imagine now that God is this Eagle, who running over with his Eyes, as it were, so many beautiful Trees, all the Women who were to be from the first to the last, perceiv'd not any one so worthy to receive the Glorious Virgin, who was to be the *little Nest* of the Heavenly *Eaglet*, who is the Word Incarnate, as *St. Ann*, in whom he rested himself, as in the Tree of *Paradise*, which he knew to be the *tallest* in Devotion, the *deepest* in Humility, the *largest* in Charity, and of the most *pleasant odour* in Sanctity.

O *Beautiful Tree*! and far other than that which was represented in a Picture at the triumphant entry of *Mary de Medicis*, Queen Mother of *Lewis 13.* which bore *Scepters* for *Boughs*, *Crowns* for *Flowers*, *Kings* for the *Stock*, and little *Deities* for the *Fruits*. *St. Ann* was the fair *Tree* of the Genealogy of *Jesus* and *Mary*, whose *Stock* is made up with the *Dauids*, the *Solomons*, and other Kings whose *Flowers* are *Diadems*; but the *Holy Virgin*, the richest *Crown*, as being the finest *Flower* of Heaven and Earth, and her *Fruit* is the Incarnate *Son of God*. Certainly as the most glorious *Diadem* of the First of the uncreated Persons, is the Production of his *Word* the second Person, whom he begat in the splendor of Saints; so, if, in one word, you would

would know the price of that Crown which St. *Ann* bore both on Earth and in Heaven, it must be said, and this is to say all, that her Treasure and her Crown, was the giving *being* to her who gave it to a God, which is to be Crown'd with the Merits of *Mary*, like the Tree with its Flowers and Fruit.

Whence it is to be concluded, That the Dignity, the Grace, and the Holiness of this *only*, and only *Perfect* Daughter, ought to reflect back to her Mother, even to a point, That she render'd her incomparable in *Sanctity*, as she was in her *Dignity*. For of two things, one must of necessity happen, Either that this holy Virgin *had not* the Power, or that *having* the Power, she communicated to her whatever we can fancy greatest in Grace. Her *Paps* have too much credit and access with the *Word*, her Son, not to have the Power, who being in the terms of *Clement* of *Alexandria*, the *Pap* of his Heavenly Father, which gave *fecundity* to all Nature, would also, as he had been the Principle of the Universe, by being *Mamelle de son Pere*, the *Virgin* should be *his*; and that from the Bosom of his Mother should proceed a Power, (but yet not without proportion) and a Force to establish a World of Grace to *make* Saints, and to *make* them *worthy* of Glory. So that it is true in some sort, and good Divinity to say, That the Felicity of the Saints is deriv'd from *Mary*, and that there is no body who is not oblig'd to her for the *fortification* of his Patience, for the *Victory* over his Temptations, for *Preservation* from Falls, for *Augmentation* of his Merits, for his final *Grace*, and finally, for his *Glory*.

This Principle suppos'd, who will doubt that St. *Ann* was not the Masterpiece of *Maries* Workmanship, and that the *Power* of this last, was not the *Measure* of the Excellence of the former? She could make a Prodigy of Virtue, and a Miracle of Greatness, therefore she did; and not only from the time that She *was* her Daughter, but ev'n *before* She was created, we may say, That She labour'd on this Masterpiece. And it is one of the greatest Miracles of the Mysteries of our Religion, that the *Children* give Life to their *Parents*; and those who are not yet, give admirable Advantages to those who already are.

Thus *Jesus* is the *Son* of *Adam*, according to Nature, and his *Father* according to Grace; the *Virgin* is the *Mother* of the *Saviour*, by the shadowing of the Holy Spirit, and is likewise the eldest *Daughter* to the Redeemer. Thus St. *Ann* is in the state of Grace, the *Daughter* of her Daughter, the *Holy Virgin*, by a *Plenitude* of Grace, which She from her received. Which

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Which ought not to be thought strange by him, who has tasted the Sense, and universal Consent of the Fathers, who assert, that what was giv'n in *Plenitude* to *Christ*, ought in *Proportion* to be attributed to the *Holy Virgin*; that they *both* were busied in the cares of our Salvation with the same Courage, tho not the same Power: It's then the Spirit of *Christ* is not only diffus'd in the new, but has its extent over all the *Old Testament*; and no Body was sav'd, but by his Merits *anticipated*; wherefore should one deny *Jesus Christ* to have in favour of the *foreseen* Merits of his Mother, granted some Graces as well *before*, as *after* his Conception, to certain Souls, especially to those most nearly alli'd to him.

Among these, *St. Ann*, in Consideration of the *Merits* of this Virgin, was elevated to the *Prerogatives* and *Crowns*, which ought to answer the degree of *Alliance* which she had to her, which was no less than of a Mother to a Daughter, an *Alliance* which establishes.

C H A P. III.

The first Reason of the Prerogatives of St. ANN.

SHE gave to the *Virgin* Being and Life, which is the dearest Treasure of Man, and the Foundation of other Perfections. In exchange, therefore, it is reasonable the *Virgin* should impart to *Her* all the Noble Qualities, which might make a Soul fill'd with Complacency to her God.

For if our Lady had an extream Zeal to carry *Jesus Christ* into the House of her Cousin *Elizabeth*, so to sanctify her Child, while he was inclos'd in her Womb; if this Zeal thought long, and her Love gave her Wings to fly thither without fear of the Inconveniences and Fatigues of the Journey, with design of procuring Holiness to her Relations, and her Blood. God having put a perfect Order in her Affections and Loves; must it not be said, That that which She had for the rest of her Relations, was but a spark in respect of the cares which She had for her which was her Mother? And must it not be believ'd She gave her a better allotment in *Jesus Christ* and his Graces; there being nothing so reasonable as to do all the good She could to her Parent?

Certainly one of the most powerful Arguments for convincing a generous Spirit, is the *fitness* of the matter; and this *fitness* is more prevalent with good Judgments, than the strictness of Laws.

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Whence

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Whence St. *Thomas* speaking of the two highest Myſteries, the *Incarnation* of the Word, and the *Reality* of his Body, the adorable Sacrament and Sacrifice of the *Altar*, ſays they ought to be *believ'd*, becauſe it was *fit* that the Son of God for the perfect *Union* of himſelf with us, ſhould be alli'd by the *Perſonal Union* with our Nature, and be *really* in the *Eucharift*, to ſatisfy the Rules of Love, which require a continual *Preſence* of the beloved Object. Laſtly, ſaies this Saint, to ſhew that theſe Myſteries have *fitneſs*, is ſufficient to ſhew, that they are ſo in *Truth*.

Now there is nothing more reaſonable, than to ſay, That the Virgin lov'd her Mother with a generous and noble Love, that is never without Liberalities and Graces; and that ſhe imparted to her the richeſt Preſents of Heav'n, ſince She had 'em in her *Power*, and her *Hands*; and that in doing ſo, She *ſatisfi'd* the moſt juſt Sentiments of Nature, and *obey'd* the Holy Laws of her God, which commanded the Honour of her Father and Mother. And as there was in this the greateſt *Fitneſs*, we proceed to ſhew, that there was alſo the greateſt

CHAP. IV.

J U S T I C E.

The ſecond Reaſon of the Prerogatives of St. ANN.

GOD's *Juſtice* would not have leſs Satisfaction for the Sins of Men, than the Death of a God. Now 'tis wonderful in the *Holy Virgin*, that to conform her ſelf to this *Juſtice*, She *forgot* (if I may ſo ſay) how She was the *Mother of God*; and She *offer'd* her ſelf, like a *bloody Victim* on the *Altar* of the Croſs. For as the Son of God ought not to paſs from the Boſom of his *Father*, into that of a *Virgin Mother*, and to make himſelf Man without *her Conſent*; ſo neither ought he, neither would he be deſtin'd to the *Death*, which was to make us *Immortal*, but by the *Conſent* of this his *Mother*.

If then She generously executes the thing in the World, which is the moſt *difficult* to her, the depriving her ſelf of the *Object* of all her Delights, conſenting to the Death of her *only Son*, an Action naturally contrary to the Love of ſuch a Mother: If She quits the part of a *Lover*, to become a *Believer*; and a Mothers *Affections*, to perform *Obedience* to God; if laſtly, *Juſtice* carries her beyond Love; how
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can it be, that the Virgin *obliged* by Divine and Humane Laws, to Honour her Mother, should not employ *all* the Artifices of her Love, and *all* the efforts of her Power, to make of St. Ann a true Sanctuary of *all* Graces?

The Grace to consult the Judgment of St. Peter, is a *Participation of Divine Nature*; the Virgin therefore having the *Plenitude* of this in her Bosom, for the *Communication* of it to Souls, and being not only blessed among all Women, but the very *Spring* of all Blessings; what part ought She to give to her *Mother*? A Duty which further proceeds from

C H A P. V.

The Obedience of the Virgin to St. ANN. The third Reason of her Prerogatives.

IF from this, that the Son of God was well pleased to submit his *impeccable* Will, to that of the Virgin; a good Consequence is drawn, how *Innocent* and *Straight* ought that Rule to be, which gave Law to the Son of God?

So to see this little Virgin *impeccable* by *Grace*, as her Son was by *Nature*, at the Feet of St. Ann, to take the Instructions and Exercises of her Mother, has one not a just Motive to believe the Innocence, and the Rectitude of the Affections and Passions of this Holy Mother, who ought to *regulate* those of her Daugther, who was the *most perfect* of all Creatures? The *Personal Union* set a part, is as much remov'd from the least spot of Sin, as the Sun from Darkness and Obscurity; and St. *Austin* took so high a flight in the Praises of the Virgin, that he got out of Sight, saying, That he advanc'd nothing that exceeded her Merit, by calling her the *Form of God*; that is, tho there be no Miracle in the World like to the Mercies of *Jesus Christ*, and those of his *Mother* be but little *Rays* in Comparison of this *Sun*; he was pleas'd to frame as it were an *Idea*, on which he cast his Eyes, to *mark* upon *his* Soul the beautiful *Lines* of the excellent Practices of Virtue, which he saw in his *Mother*, to the end one might see in the *Son*, as it were a *lively Image*, and *Expression* of the rare Virtues of the *Mother*; or else, and *rather* this brave Title of *Form of God*, means that *Jesus Christ* had a design, that as in the Looking-Glass, the *Image* of his Face is seen, who *looks* into it, and as Wax receives the Form and Figure of the *Seal*, which is *imprinted* on it; ev'n so, the Holy Virgin was *mark'd*

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with the *Seal* of the Divine Perfections of *Jesus*; and She has represented them in her self after a very excellent manner.

So nothing is advanc'd concerning the *Merits* of *St. Ann*, which accrues not to the Honour and Glory of her *Daughter*, by calling her the true *Form of the Virgin*, and by saying She had such Accumulation of *Perfections*, that to see the Holy *Virgin* practice those *Virtues*, which came so near those of her Mother, one would reasonably judg that *St. Ann* might serve as an *Original* and *Model* to the holy Actions of the *Virgin*, if they had not been otherwise more Holy in proportion to the Grace of the *Mother of God*, which heightned them.

To what degree of Sanctity ought *St. Ann* to be exalted, who so lively expressed, and so perfectly represented in her self, the *Virtues* of the *Virgin*; and whose rare *Qualities* might be the *Idea's* and *Patterns* of those of this her so worthy a *Daughter*. But

CHAP. VI.

The Glory of JESUS CHRIST.

The fourth Reason of the Prerogatives of St. ANN

REquires that *St. Ann* should be such, to be his worthy Grand-mother. For if the *Messias* from the time that he prepar'd his Birth for the World, and put his first disposals and designs in *Abraham*, desir'd Innocence and Sanctity from him to merit this favour; must he not desire those incomparably greater in *St. Ann*, according to the measure that She more nearly approach'd his Blood. The Holy *Virgin* then seeing the Glory of her Son engag'd, and the Sanctity of her Mother to enter into the Interests of the *Incarnate Word* her Son, must She not have made *St. Ann* a Work of Grace worthy of the *Admiration* of Angels, and of the *Adoration* of Men?

And if elsewhere, in the designs of the eternal Providence, and in the Language of Scripture, *Names* serve for a mark of *Offices*, and *Offices* are the measures of *Merits*; *St. Ann* having been chosen in the *Idea's* of eternal Predestination to be the *Grand-Mother* of *Jesus Christ*; ought not this step to comprehend as many Excellencies as demonstrate the Sublimeness of this Saints Perfections? There need be us'd only the *Dignity* of her *Name* of Grandmother of *Jesus Christ*. An Argument which the Apostle uses to prove the Pre-eminences of *Jesus Christ* above the *Angelical* Natures; for that he was the *Son of God*. The *Dignity* therefore in *St. Ann*, that having enter'd by the *Conception* and *Nativity* of the

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Virgin.

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Virgin, into the Oeconomy of the *Incarnation*, and into the state of the *Hypostatical Union*, She was by this her Daughter, exalted into so dazzling a *Throne* of Glory, that there is only above it, the *Trinity* of uncreated Persons, the *Humanity* of *Jesus Christ*, and the Holiness of her Daughter, *Mother of God*; leaving below her Greatness all other created *Eminencies*; without doubt *St. Ann* ought to expect such a Pre-eminence from the *Queen* of Virtues, and the worthy Mother of the King of Virtues, the *Virgin*. It remains now to see

C H A P. VII.

The Internal Perfections of St. ANN

With Relation to which we must Sacrifice *closed* Eyes, like those who ador'd the *Fortune* of the *Romans*, and in the Extasis of our Hearts, and in the humble Sentiments that carry our Souls to confess our *Impotencies*, to acknowledg the *Merits* and *Virtues* of her, who bore in her barren Womb the first fruits of our *Redemption*, and who nourish'd with her Milk the Fruit of all *Benediction*; let us be content to say, That as the fairest Flower of the Virgins Crown was the Meriting her exalted Dignity of *Mother of God*; so that of *St. Ann* is; that God gave to her *Merits*, this glorious Advantage of conceiving in her Bowels a Daughter, whose Conception *without Sin*, and Birth full of Honour, effected the *Re-establishment* of the *Universe*. Merits which were

C H A P. VIII.

Her Prayers.

FOR tho God in the Decrees of his *Providence* be resolv'd to bestow certain Graces on some Persons; he nevertheless determin'd before the World not to grant them but to those who ask for them; and in the everlasting Preparation of such Favours, their *Prayers* are included either as *Causes* or *Means* of obtaining.

Hence he would have us ask the very things which he is resolv'd to give us, as we must open our Eyes to receive the light of the Sun, and observe some *Formalities* to obtain the Graces of a Prince. Thus God having in his eternal Predestination prepar'd this incomparable Benefit for *St. Ann*, to be *Mother* of the *Mother* of the *Word Incarnate*; he would that She should acquire this ineffable Treasure by her Tears and Vows; that

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II

that so her *Merit* might enter into the Execution of this everlasting *Counsel*. St. *Ann* therefore having been above twenty years in a State of Barrenness with him whom God had given her for a Husband, St. *Joachim*, was in Affliction to see her self without a Child, who might blot out the Reproach which She met with in the Company of other Ladies; requested daily from Heaven, with a Countenance of Grief, a Remedy for her *Disgrace*.

But there is nothing which so much contracted her Heart, as the Confusion and Shame which the High-Priest *Iffachar* one day put her into, as She went according to her Custom to *Jerusalem*, at the Solemnity of one of the great Feasts of the year, where in face of all the World, he reproach'd her of Rashness and Boldness, to appear with the rest, She who bore the marks of Gods *Malediction*, with which being troubled to the quick, and not knowing from whom to receive Consolation, She had recourse to God with Supplication to take from her this *Reproach*, and with Promise to Consecrate to him the Fruit which he should please to give her; and not daring to present her self any more openly to the World, She threw her self into a Solitude and Retreat, which shut up all Avenues to Company, having no other Companions but her Thoughts, and her Affections for Heaven. In this lonesome place, where She was wholly attentive to her God, wholly fixed and bent in Spirit and Will to him, to consider his Greatness, and admire his Perfections, and where She did every day noble and heroic Acts of Love, and of Conformity to the Divine Pleasure, of Faith and Hope, of Adoration and Glorification, and other Virtues; not to speak of the Sublime Operations of the *Mystical Life*, to which God had exalted her, and which all the Words of Men are not able to explicate.

But where in recompence of her *Introversions* and *Recollections*, there was happily fulfill'd in her the Prophecy in *Isa. 35.* in favour of the Souls that retire from their Commerce with the World, to be *busied* only with God; for as much as She receiv'd unspeakable Joys in her Desert; and that her Retreat was to her a Spring of living Delights. For the heavenly Angel came to visit her on the beginning of *December*, and brought to her the happy, and the fortunate News from God, of a Daughter, which should be named *Mary*, which should not only cause Joy to her, but should likewise be the happiness of infinite others, since she was to be the Mother of the *Messias* promised in the Law; and to collect in her self the Riches of *Libanus* and *Carmel*, which are the Fruitfulness of a Mother, and the Integrity of the Virgin in the same Spirit.

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And, as has been said, so God repair'd with an exceeding advantage by *himself*, and by the abundance of *his Graces*, all the Losses which this Soul suffer'd, retired from the Contentments and Recreations of all Creatures, and made her Solitude like *Paradise*. Mirth and Joy are found *here*, and Praises are *here* retain'd; for having seen her *Barrenness* follow'd with the Birth of a Daughter, who is the *Treasure* of Heaven and Earth, and who gave her a *God* for *Grandson*: O the Noble Fruit of the *Prayer* of *St. Ann*! *Mary*, who is the Wonder of *Nature*, the Prodigy of *Grace*, and the Miracle of *Glory*. After her *Prayer* comes

C H A P. IX.

Her Humility.

IF *Prayer* be in the Opinion of the Fathers, an *Elevation* of the Soul to *God*, as of a *Vapour* from the *Earth* to *Heaven*; it is necessary

First, That as the *Vapour* is *elevated* from the *Earth* by the Rays of the *Sun*, attracting it with its *heat*, and subtilizing it by taking away its *gravitating* Quality derived from the *Earth*, the place of its Origine; just so the *Prayer* of *St. Ann*, that it might be *elevated* as high as *Gods* Throne, was directed thitherward in little *Fumes* which the *heat* of Divine Love excited in her, *purifying* whatever she had of *Earth*, that her Soul might have only the Affections and Sentiments of *Heaven*.

Secondly, That as the *Vapour* being in the *Middle* Region of the Air, melts and *falls back* towards the *Earth*, as if the *Sun* by its Rays would constrain it to *return to*, and *know* its first Principle; just so the *Prayer* which the Tongue and Heart of *St. Ann* had sent up into the Bosom of *God*, ought by the Divine Ray to be abased and *reflected* into the Consideration of one's *Nothing*, and to return to the *Earth* by Sentiments of *Humility*; but such as should bring along with them the Showers and the Dews of *Jesus* and *Mary*, and which should fertilize the *Human Nature* with a *God-Man*, and with the *Mother of God*: An excellent Rule of *Prayer* in the *Approaches* and *Fervours*, the *Unions* and *Exaltations* of one Being to *descend* back into *Meanness*, and the Meditation that one is *Nothing*, that one is *worth* *Nothing*, that one *can do* *Nothing*, that one *merits* nothing from *God*.

Which is the Reason perhaps why the High Priest sprinkled those who offered Sacrifices, with Ashes mixt with Water, to advertise them that they were nothing but *dead Earth*, incapable of Consistence

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and Motion without the Favours of *Heaven*; and that they ought to be of *Abraham's* mind, who said, I will appear before my Lord, *dust and ashes as I am*. Hence it follows that we ought to hope for the Grace of God, and *Supernatural Powers*.

It is in these *Valleys of mean esteem* of ones self, says *David*, that God makes the Fountains of his Favours, and the Waters of his Grace to flow; and not upon the *Mountains* and *Spirits of Presumption*, that approach the Temples and the Altars, with Head and Face lifted up before him, in whose Presence the *Angels* tremble, and the *Seraphims* sink down into the lowest depths with Reverence; and before whom, says *St. Austin*, if thou wilt humble thy self, the bait of thy *Humility* attracts him, and he is constrain'd to descend from his *Father's* Bosom into thine; thou possessest him, and dost with him after the Inclination of thy will: But if vain glory accompany thy Prayer, thou findest a God who has Thunder in his hand to destroy thee. 'Twas in these vallies of mean esteem of her self, the Prayer of *St. Ann* found Forces, and the grant of her Requests. Her Third Merit was

CHAP. X.

Her Generous Confidence in God's Providence.

THE Earth, in my Opinion, is the *Noblest*, tho the *last* of the Elements, because being not able to act of its self, this state gives it so much Sympathy with the *Sun*, that it becomes fruitful through the favour of his Beams in all kinds of Production: So it is a very glorious Weakness, and powerful Impotence, for an humble Soul to acknowledg her *Miseries* and her *Nothing*: Since God beholding this *Void*, he immediately replenishes it with his *Grace*; for where the *Creature* is not, there is the *Creator* presently found; and where *Manhood* leaves us, there the *Godhead* enters by a Consequence as necessary in the Order of *Grace*, as in that of *Nature*, the Air immediately fills those places which it finds void.

Now as God has extraordinary Graces that reward *Humility*, and exalt it from its meanness into which it seems plunged; among others there is a generousness of Heart which the humble Soul draws from the great Confidence she puts in this, that an Infinite Wisdom both knows, and is able; and will help her; triumphing over her *Miseries* and *Weaknesses*; and being to her what her Soul is to her Body, or the *Heaven* to the *Earth*.

Confidence.

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Confidence in God, which comprehends all the most distant degrees of nature in a most simple *Unity*, unites these two Contrarieties, to believe that we can *do nothing*, and that we can *do every thing*. That we are able to do nothing of our *own* strength, and that we can do every thing in virtue of the *Divine Arm* on which we relye. Thus when *Humility* has made us diffident of our selves, we ought to raise our *Courages* by an holy and invincible *Faith*, that may make us brave all the *Disgraces* and *Difficulties* of the World, looking to this all-seeing eye, and all-powerful Arm, who has a heart readier to give to us, than ours to ask or receive.

Such was the Prayer of *S. Ann*, animated with a lively *Faith*, not only a *general* one, which made her believe that God to whom she pray'd was all-powerful, and all-good, and had a *Paternal Providence*, and an infinite love for her; but a *particular* faith that this gracious God would grant her the desir'd *Grace*, according to the Pattern of another *Ann* the Mother of *Samuel*, 1 *King*. 1. Concerning whom the Sacred Oracle pronounces that after the Prayer which she made to obtain a Son, she was no more agitated by any waves of *Inquietude*; but was left in a constant evenness, and a perfect tranquility of mind, as if she already had the thing she pray'd for, says *St. Chrysostom* of the first *Anna*, and felt the Babe form'd and stirring in her womb, inasmuch as she had beg'd it with a spirit not wavering, and doubtful of success, but with an entire confidence, and an unshaken persuasion that she should obtain. 'Tis thus, says *St. Thomas* 2a. 2æ. Q. 83. that as *Charity* makes our Prayer *meritorious*, *Confidence* makes it *impetratorious*, or effectual. Thus it is that those great *Courages* who fully *confide* in God, glorifie him more by the Noble and high Sentiments that they have of him, than a Million of narrow hearts, to whom all seems lost as soon as they see any thing fail 'em, and themselves left by some one of these *broken reeds*, the Creatures on which they rely'd.

Thus it is that *St. Basil* in his 20th. *Orat. de Principatu* exalts *Confidence* as much as *Sacrifice*, and says, It's no more lawful to place it any where else than in God, than to present the *Cult* which the *Sacrifice* contains, to any other than him. To this I add, that as the Honour we give to God in *Sacrifice* is very great by reason of the *Protestation* we there make of acknowledging him for our *Sovereign*: So that which he receives from us by *Confidence*, is wonderful, inasmuch as it is like an *Oath of Fealty*, and an *Homage* whereby we oblige our selves to be willing to depend on him alone, avowing his infinite bounty and infallible verity, and renouncing every other hold which we might

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might have but him, which is very honourable to him; and it is thus that our Saint by the vigour and firmness of her *Faith* merited the greatest Grace in the World next to the *Personal Union*, and *Divine Maternity*, that is, to bear in her Womb the *Virgin*, who was to be the *Mother of God*, and to have for *Grandson*, and embrace in her Arms no less than him who has *God* for his *Father*.

After these Preeminences of this great *Saint*, we have nothing to do but to contribute our *Homages* by Invocation of her *Powers*, and the imitation of her *Virtues*. As for,

CHAP. XI.

Her Credit and Power in Heaven.

IF St. *Ann* next to the *Virgin* be the nearest to *Jesus Christ*, and has a greater share of him than any of all the Saints in the *Incarnation*, which is the cause of the Crowns they wear; it is easie to conclude, that this *Proximity* has given her the most eminent of *Paradise*, as water partakes more of the qualities of its Spring, the nearer it is to it; and that her *Credit* is parallel to her *Greatness*, which the better to comprehend, it is necessary to remember how all Gods creatures being the productions of his Goodness, by the Being which he gave them as an extract of his own, he would have them to rejoyne again to him as to their final, as well as efficient cause, placing this Perfection in this Reunion and Return to their Principle.

Now according to the Doctrine of St. *Thomas*, in his Book of the *Humility of Christ*, his Will was to recall to himself middle things by the high, and low ones by the middle; and he makes use of *Jesus Christ*, to gather together, and reunite by him whatever is in Heaven or in Earth; and this *Jesus Christ* makes use in the first place of the *Holy Virgin* as the nearest ally'd, then of some Persons of Election and near approach to the *Incarnation*, the Principle of all *Sanctification*; upon this account therefore St. *Ann* was to have the next rank to her Daughter, and must approach nearest after her in the Sanctity of *Jesus Christ*, and in Grace, which is with St. *James* a quality wholly Divine, descending from the *Father of Lights* into our Souls, and must come there first by *Christ*, then by the *Virgin*, and after that by St. *Ann*; consequently in our Indigencies and Needs we must address our selves by St. *ANN* to the *Virgin*, and by the *Virgin* to *Jesus Christ*, and by *Jesus Christ* to God his Father, who can refuse nothing to his Son,

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no more than *he* can to his *Mother*, or *she* to *hers* who is *St. Ann*. And as *St. Gertrude*, a Virgin of an incomparable Piety and Glory of the *French Scepter*, saw one day in an extacy Angels who descended from Heaven, and who in the midst of the Quire where the singing was, brought a most resplendent *Throne of Glory*, in the which the *H. Virgin* being seated, like a *Queen* full of Majesty, received the Prayers of all the Nuns who approacht this *Throne*, and fulfilled their request.

It must be said that this *Throne* was the Glorious *St. Ann*, in which *Jesus* and *Mary* are set down; and if we would obtain any Grace whatever, we must prostrate our selves before this *Throne of Grace*, *Ann* being rightly interpreted *Grace*, and go thither with Confidence and Fervour. But above all, with

C H A P. XII.

The Imitation of her Virtues,

BY which we revere her *Sanctity*, as by our Prayers we humbly acknowledg her *Power*.

And this the whole end and fruit that God would have by *Invocations* and *Cults* toward this *Saint*, and the sole means which those Souls who carry this fair Name of *Ann*, have to possess it with advantage.

For as God seeing that we are but impotent and wretched Creatures, having no Present worthy to approach his *Throne*, and to be offered to him, desires from our Weakness only the *sanctification* of his Name, which is perform'd by *Holiness* in our Manners, and *Innocence* in our Lives.

It is also this his Grandmother desires from the Souls who carry her Name, signifying a Spring of *Grace*, that their hearts be always replenish'd *with it*, for that else they would possess it but by injustice and violence; and this would be to have a *splendid* name in appearance, accompanied with very ill circumstances; and to fall into the reproach of a *Judas*, a word which signifies *Confession*, but who was notwithstanding the *perfidious* Traytor of his Master; or of an *Absalom*, That is to say, the *Peace of his Father*, and who was yet his torment and his scourge; or of a *Solomon*, *amabilis Deo*, the beloved of God, by whom he was nevertheless *bated* for his impurities. This, lastly, would be to be a *Capernaum*, *Ager penitentiae*, the Field of penitence, a Town which was yet so obstinate, and which car'd so little to do Penance.

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Penance, that *Jesus Christ* in *St. Luke* swore its destruction.

A Name then so favourable, and so full of Grace as *Ann*, ought to furnish continual matters of Virtue to the Souls who have the honour to bear it, if they but never so little permit their thoughts to meditate on it; and this obliges them *particularly*, as it *generally* obliges all Christians,

To have always holy *Alliances* and Sacred ties with God the Principle of *Grace*, to follow always the guidances and motives of *Grace*, but especially to practice such of *her* Virtues as *Jesus Christ* knows to be most convenient for our condition; as among other, *her* solitudes and *her* retreats, so to make you often seen to God and to your self: For it is in the *Hives* that the Bees make *secretly* their Honey, and the *Silkworms* make their Silk within their *Cells*; Nature forms the King of *Metals* in silence, in the *Caverns* of the Earth, out of the noise and sight of Men: The *Manna* fell during the *rest* and *calm* of the night, not with Storm or Tempest, but gently and without tumult, as the *dew* which is softly and without shew transpir'd into the bosom of the Earth.

It is not in the hurry of the World, in the noise of House-keeping, in the Inquietude of Cares, in the turmoils of an active and a divided Life, but in the *separation* from every thing in the *bottom* of the Soul, in *Tranquility*, the *disengagement* and *liberty* of the Spirit in the *recollection* and *solitude* of the Heart, where the Holy Spirit sheds abundantly its Graces, to prepare a Soul, of whom he designs to make an *instrument* of his *Wonders*, as he did of *St. Ann*.

It is in this Sanctuary that this *hidden Manna* is found, *Rev. 2.* that is given to the Souls Triumphant over the World, which is no other thing but an ineffable *Consolation* begot from a very inward and continual *Inclination* towards God, with a *sense* and *relish* of his Truths and Greatness, better apprehended by *Experience* than by *Knowledge*.

It is in the Quietude of this *Divine Center* and *Friend*, that there is tasted this kind of Prayer which you desire, Holy Souls, which consists not so much in that which is *ours* in functions and uses of *our* Powers, but in that which is *God's*, and in the infusion of *his* Graces, where through a *full silence* of the Soul, which is a denudation of *Thoughts* in the Understanding, and of *Affections* in the Will; the sole *Master of Hearts* speaks and brings nothing thither but that sole disposition of Respect and Submission to the most pure, most simple, and most inward action of the *Uncreated Spirit* in *ours*.

It is *here* you shall not only be able to carry your Hopes beyond the

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Forces, and to cast your filial and amorous Confidences into the Protection of God's Arm, and into the Sweetness of the Love which he hath for you; but shall also adjust you to your Rule, which can't fail, that after the request of some Grace from God, you may have your Spirit at rest, and *deposited* in that of God, to wait for, with Patience and Silence, as *Jeremy* says, the Salvation of God.

It is *here*, That after the Pattern of *St. Ann*, you give up your self to the entire Consummation of the most holy Will, and most adorable Designs, which God has had from Eternity upon you, and upon each moment of your Life. And it is *here*, that your Soul appearing quite *naked* before him, submits her self to him with absolute Resignation of *Spirit*, of *Sense*, of *Tast*, and of all manner of *Satisfaction*, desiring nought but *God's* only Good, and the Interest of his Glory; breathing forth these Words from all your Heart, I cast my self at the Mercy of the Love which you have for me, O my God. I am the Object of the Vigilance and the Affection of a God. It's enough for me that thou takest the Title of my *Father*, to make me see that thy *Power* is inseparable from thy *Goodness*, that I ought to expect thence all the good that shall be to thy Glory, and my Salvation, which is whatever I must; that all the present desires of God be accomplished on me: I am content and indifferent to all, for Scarcity or Abundance, to Act or to Suffer, for Obtaining or Refusing, Consolation or Desolation, *Calvary* or *Thabor*. I offer my self to all as a *pure Capacity* of God to his designs.

It is *here*, lastly, That you must supplicate him to lead you into *Devotion*, and all other *Exercises* of Life; either *retired* or *secular*, by the way he has ordained for you, whether of *Conformity*, which is a total *Subjection*, and resolute *Dependence* of *your* Will on the *Divine* Will in all Events and Occurrences, however displeasing and irksom, comforting your self in your very misfortune, or disgrace, of seeing you an Object of the *Divine Severity*, if it tend to his Glory. Or

Of *Uniformity*, which adds to the other an *Union* of *your* Will with the *Divine*, which takes away all repugnance and difficulty, and brings an appetite and longing desire of what God *Wills*, and carries the Soul to *will* it, for this reason only, that God is therewith contented, and desires it; and which causes that in all our internal and external *Operations*, the Soul be in a moment *united* to God, to know in these his good pleasure, and to put the same immediately into Practice: Or lastly,

Of *Deformity*, which *unites* the *Will* by such an efficacy of Love to the *Divine*, that the Soul no longer *feels* or *perceives* her self, than as if She
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were really *no more* in being; and in her Manners and Actions, only feels in her self the *uncreated Will*, by an intire Transformation made her own, as we see a little drop of *Water* presently take the Colour, Taste, and Nature of *Wine*; and a piece of *Iron* thrown into the Fire, quit in some manner, the *Form* and Appearance of *Iron*, to take that of *Fire*; and as the *Air*, which is penetrated by the Rays of the *Sun*, seems not so much to be *enlightned*, as to be *light* it self.

By these *three ways*, or even any one of these, you'l *worthily* Honour the Greatness and *Prerogatives*, and certainly implore the *Favours* of the Great St. ANN.

The Prayer to St. ANN.

O Great Saint, in Honour of Gods regarding and exalting You in his Eternity, to these most high and sublime Estates of Mother of the Mother of God, and Grandmother of Jesus Christ;

And in Union of all the Graces which were given you in consequence of these; of the Sanctity of your Soul, of your most profound Humility, of your perfect Resignation, of your eminent Devotion, of your Silence and Retreat, of the tenderness of your Loves towards your Daughter and Grandson, of your continual Application of Mind toward these two Divine Objects; of all the Offices of Grandmother, which you were worthy to render to Jesus Christ in Honour of this, that he hath so strongly ti'd you in Blood, Spirit and Grace, to his Hypostatical Union.

In Adoration of all the Virtues of your Life, and of the last Breath, in which You gave up the Spirit in the state of final Grace, consummated in the hand of your Grandson, and your God.

In Homage of the Right and Power which you had of Mother over your Daughter, and of Grandmother over her Son, and of their Submissions and Reverences which they render'd You.

In Acknowledgment, lastly, of this, That you were not only of the Family which Jesus Christ came to establish upon Earth, but even Mother and Head of this Family, and looking on Jesus, as making a part of your Family.

O glorious Saint, associate me to this worthy Family, bind and unite my Soul to Jesus Christ, and that I may be wholly his; since you touch him so near, as there is none but Mary betwixt you and Him.

O, I believe, That in Virtue of this great Communication of Love and Grace, which was between you, and the Author, and the Mother of Grace, that you have Right and Power in Heav'n, to give Souls to Jesus, and to Mary.

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The Prerogatives of St. Ann.

O my Sovereign, next to Jesus and Mary, give them my Soul; I yield and resign to You all the Power that I have over my self; I put under Your Government and Protection all the Moments and Motions of my Life, and all the Persons that compose my Family, which henceforward I will call Yours.

Lastly, My all-dear Mother and Mistress, for the last Grace, I beg of You, That as You had always your Eyes upon the Divine Face of Jesus Christ, and Your Heart in his with Burnings and Flames which he enkindled within you when you had the Honour of Kissing and Embracing him; a time which so continued to increase each moment, that at last it put a Period to Your Life, when not being able to support the effort of it, You happily, and by an excess and languishing of Love, expir'd in the hands of Your Daughter, and in the Kisses of Your Grandson.

O that You would just so assist me in the Passage and Decisive Moment of mine Eternity, and obtain for me an happy Death under the Protection of the Virgin, and in the Grace of Jesus.

Approbation.

Nous soubsignez Docteurs en Theologie de la Faculté de Paris, certifions avoir leu, & examiné ce Livre Intitulé Les Grandeurs de Sainte Anne, dédié a la Reyne par les Filles de Saint Joseph, auquel n'avons rien trouvé que de conforme à l'Eglise Apostolique & Romaine. Au contraire l'avons estimé digne d'estre mis en lumiere, comme tres-utile pour entretenir la Devotion a Sainte Anne. En foy de quoy nous avons signé. Fait a Paris ce dixiesme Juillet Mil six cens quarante-trois.

Vincent Jude.
C. Bourlon.

The Approbation in English.

We the Doctors in Divinity underwritten, of the Faculty of Paris, do certify, That we have read and examined this Book, intituled, The Prerogatives of St. Ann, dedicated to the Queen by the Maids of St. Joseph, wherein we have found nothing but what is conformable to the Apostolick and Roman Church. On the contrary, we have thought it worthy to be Published as very useful to maintain the Devotion to St. Ann. In Faith whereof we have signed. Given at Paris this 10th of July, 1643.

Vincent Jude.
C. Bourlon.

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